

## DEKALB POLICE DEPARTMENT

Subject: **Respirator Protection Program**

Policy #: **407.7**

Effective Since: 6-1-07

Revision Effective: 1-1-19

FTO Training Task: # 25

Reference Material: ILEAS Respirator Protection Program documents

ILEAP Standards Covered: NA

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**PURPOSE:** It is the purpose of this policy to outline the process of issuing and using protective respirators.

**POLICY:** The Dekalb Police Department recognizes that officers may be called upon to respond to incidents involving nuclear, biological, or chemical agents. Within the bounds of available resources, it is the policy of the department to establish the Respirator Protection Program in order to provide for the protection of officers in an incident involving nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. Pursuant to this policy, the department shall make respirators available to every officer.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Air Purifying Respirator (APR)** - a respirator to be used in toxic environments, but where the breathable level of oxygen is known to be sufficient. Air-purifying respirators are designed to protect the wearer for short periods only.

**Escape-only Respirator** - a respirator intended to be used only for an emergency exit.

**Fit Test** - a test to ensure that an issued respirator is the proper size for the wearer and that an air tight seal is achieved between their face and the respirator in order to determine a correct respirator size and fit.

**Licensed Health Care Professional (LHCP)** - includes medical doctor, registered nurse, paramedic, or EMT.

**NBC** - Nuclear, Biological, or Chemical

**Qualitative Fit Test (QLFT)** - a pass/fail test to assess the adequacy of respirator fit that relies on the individual's response to a test agent.

**Quantitative Fit Test (QNFT)** - an assessment of respirator fit by numerically measuring the amount of leakage into the respirator.

**Respirator Administrator** - assigned person responsible for overseeing the respirator program.

### PROCEDURE:

#### I. **Responsibilities**

A. The Chief of Police is responsible to ensure that:

1. The Respirator Protection Program is instituted and operational.
2. An operational and appropriate respirator and canister is available for every officer.
3. Each officer has the appropriate training and knowledge pursuant to this policy.

B. The Respirator Administrator (currently the Patrol Division Commander) is responsible for:

1. Being familiar with this policy and having the appropriate training and understanding of the use of the respirators.
2. Developing a training and testing program which meets the appropriate state and federal requirements and ensuring that it is followed.
3. Maintaining any necessary medical, training, equipment, and testing records.

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- C. Officers are responsible for ensuring that:
  - 1. They have a full understanding of the use of the respirators and the requisite skills necessary to use them when necessary.
  - 2. They have a full understanding of this policy and its requirement for APR use.
  - 3. They keep the equipment in good working order by following maintenance procedures.

### II. **Respirator Equipment**

- A. Respirators and supporting equipment should be approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) when possible.
- B. Presently, the department has selected the NIOSH-approved AVON FM-12 air-purifying respirator.
- C. The NIOSH-approved AVON DPF-12 canister has been selected for this respirator.
- D. Other supporting equipment such as carrying cases, lens inserts, and other canisters may be selected by the Chief of Police or a designated staff member.

### III. **Fit Testing**

- A. At the time of initial issuance and thereafter on an annual basis, a respirator fit testing shall be used to determine the ability of each member to obtain a satisfactory fit with the issued APR.
- B. Fit testing will be conducted by a trained employee from the police or fire department.
- C. Fit testing will be conducted using either a qualitative or quantitative method.
- D. A written record of the fit testing will be completed and maintained by the Respirator Administrator.

### IV. **Use of the Respirator**

- A. Each sworn officer will be issued the following equipment:
  - 1. One AVON FM-12 respirator
  - 2. One AVON DPF-12 filter canister
  - 3. One canvas carrying bag
- B. Use of prescription eyewear:
  - 1. Use of prescription eyeglasses (or any other eyewear) is not allowed for use with an APR respirator.
  - 2. Officers who wear prescription eyeglasses to correct their normal vision will be provided with monacle inserts for the respirator that have been made to the individual's eyewear prescription by the respirator manufacturer or other approved vendor, at no cost to the officer.
  - 3. Officers who need monacle inserts for their respirators will make arrangements with the Respirator Administrator for production of the inserts to their prescription.
- C. Substituting equipment: officers may not substitute any equipment or use, apply, or affix any non-departmentally issued accessories or items to the APR's.
- D. Limitations on respirator use:
  - 1. The AVON FM-12 respirator shall not be used for fire fighting; the respirator is not for use in any oxygen-deficient environment.
  - 2. **The respirator is intended for use as a means of emergency escape only in an incident involving nuclear, biological, or chemical hazards** . Since it is impossible to know when or where an incident may occur, it is recommended

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that the respirator equipment be carried with the officer, in their vehicle, during regular duty.

E. Appropriate Use:

1. Whenever the officer reasonably believes that an imminent threat of a nuclear, biological, or chemical nature exists, the officer should put on the respirator with the canister.
2. Canisters are to remain in their sealed bag until needed. The normal shelf life of a canister in a sealed bag is 10 years. Once the canister has been removed from the sealed bag the shelf life is reduced to approximately one year.
3. After putting the respirator on, the employee should ensure that it has a proper seal by performing a negative pressure test as demonstrated in training.
4. If possible, employees should remove themselves from the area of the threat before taking off the respirator.
5. If the employee is unable to be removed from the threat area, it is imperative that the respirator remains intact and properly seals the face throughout the duration of the incident.

V. **Maintenance and Inspection**

- A. Employees shall be responsible for cleaning the respirator after each use and replacing the filters when necessary. The department maintains a supply of replacement filters.
- B. Employees are also responsible for the respirator equipment issued and shall report any problems or maintenance issues to the Respirator Administrator as soon as possible.
- C. Cleaning will be done according to the procedures set forth in the training documentation.
- D. During the annual fit testing, the respirator equipment will be inspected by the persons conducting the fit testing to ensure satisfactory operating conditions of the equipment.

VI. **Training**

- A. All personnel issued an APR shall be trained prior to its use.
- B. Training shall cover the proper use of the respirators, including:
  1. Putting the respirator on.
  2. Putting the canister on the respirator.
  3. Taking off the respirator.
  4. Storage of the respirator.
  5. Proper care and cleaning.
  6. The capabilities and limitations of the APR and the supporting equipment.
- C. Refresher training will be conducted on an annual basis, at the same time as the annual fit testing.

VII. **Special Use of the Respirator**

- A. If the Chief of Police or a Division Commander deems necessary, the Respirator Protection Program may be expanded to include "special use" of the APR. **Special use is any use of the APR that is not "escape only,"** such as for use in a SWAT operation, planned riot control with chemical agent use, etc.
- B. If such an expansion of the program is undertaken, the following steps will be taken by the department:

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1. Review and update this policy to provide for the training and use of the program expansion.
2. Ensure that this policy is amended to include requirements as outlined by the Illinois Department of Labor, OSHA, and any other requisite regulations.
3. Ensure that medical examinations by a licensed health care provider (LHCP) of each affected officer are conducted at department expense on an annual basis.

**VIII. Program Evaluation**

- A. The Respirator Protection Program will be evaluated on an annual basis, at the time of the annual fit testing and training. The trainers will solicit employee feedback on the program during this time, to include any concerns, suggestions, or improvement ideas.
- B. The purpose of the evaluation will be to determine the effectiveness of this program.
- C. The Respirator Administrator will be responsible for analyzing the evaluation and making any changes to the program based on feedback from the evaluation.

**Policy originally issued 8-21-03; this revision becomes effective on 1-1-19 by authority of the Chief of Police .**

NOTE: This policy and procedure summarizes the department's position on this specific matter. This policy is for general direction and guidance primarily designed for use by the department's members. This policy is for internal use only and does not create or enlarge an officer's liability in any way. This policy shall not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of an internal departmental complaint and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.